

## Watershed Operations

October 2009

## ***Weiser River Watershed, Southern Washington County, Idaho***

### **Introduction**

This watershed project, located in southern Washington County, will primarily address water quality issues. Funds will be available the first year to help farmers and ranchers upgrade irrigation systems and install sediment basins to conserve water and improve water quality.



The project is located in southern Washington County, Idaho.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

### **Project Description**

- **Location:** Southern Washington County, 1st Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** \$430,000

This project will improve ground and surface water quality in the Weiser area, a small rural community of 5,343 located in southwest Idaho. The project will help farmers and ranchers install conservation practices that reduce nutrient, pesticide, and sediment loss from agricultural land, and improve overall water quality.

### **Partners**

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Weiser River Soil Conservation District
- Weiser Irrigation District
- Washington County Commissioners
- Idaho Soil Conservation Commission
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

### **Benefits**

This project will improve irrigation systems, resulting in a 65% reduction in sediment and nutrients in area streams, and a 60% reduction of nitrate seepage into the groundwater. Managing water, nutrients, and pesticides will greatly reduce contaminants in the project area's surface and ground water and will improve water quality.



Local producers discuss the benefits of improved irrigation systems, such as gated pipe and surge.

---

## **Weiser River Watershed, Southern Washington County, Idaho**

---

### **Economic Opportunities**

The project will help the local economy by providing financial incentives to area farmers and ranchers to improve irrigation and water management systems. These upgrades will improve irrigation water efficiency which will be more cost effective, and also reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Local farm and irrigation supply dealers should realize a boost in sales of irrigation systems, pumps, pipes, new nozzle packages, and soil moisture monitoring electronics.

### **Statewide Perspective**

With more than 50% of the monitored wells with nitrate levels above what is permitted for drinking water, the southern Washington County area was Idaho's number one priority for nitrate reduction. This project will help meet ground water quality goals for the Weiser area. It will also assist in meeting water quality objectives outlined in the Weiser River Plan, Weiser Flat Plan, and Snake River-Hells Canyon Total Maximum Daily Load Plans, and will help restore beneficial uses of water.

### **For More Information**

USDA, NRCS

9173 W. Barnes Drive, Suite C  
Boise, Idaho 83709

Phone: 208-378-5700

[www.id.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov)



A filter strip catches sediment and contaminants in irrigation water runoff.

***Helping People Help the Land***

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

